

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08  
FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 SP-02 STR-07 TRSE-00 LAB-04  
SIL-01 OMB-01 L-03 PM-05 NSC-05 SS-15 AGRE-00  
DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /088 W  
-----018509 031410Z /43

R 021758Z FEB 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4642  
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS  
AMEMBASSY OSLO  
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM  
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: ELAB, EIND, EEC  
SUBJ: STATUS OF EC COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL FOR  
"CODETERMINATION"

REF: BRUSSELS 1727

1. AS FAR AS THE EC ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (ESC)  
IS CONCERNED, "CODETERMINATION"--WORKER REPRESENTATION  
ON COMPANY BOARDS--IS NOT AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME.  
AT A PLENARY SESSION FEBRUARY 2, THE ESC UNANIMOUSLY  
ADOPTED AN OPINION ON WORKER PARTICIPATION THAT POINTEDLY  
FAILS TO ENDORSE CODETERMINATION AS A MODEL FOR THE  
EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

2. GEORGE DEBUNNE, BELGIAN UNION LEADER WHO SERVES AS  
CHAIRMAN OF THE ESC WORKERS' GROUP, TOLD THE SESSION THAT  
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WHILE MANY PEOPLE SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY IN PRINCIPLE,  
"NOBODY REALLY HAS THE RIGHT ANSWER AS TO HOW TO ACHIEVE  
THIS...YOU CANNOT IMPOSE AN ANSWER."

3. DEBUNNE WAS RESTATING POINTS MADE BY AN ESC  
SUBCOMMITTEE IN A NINE-PARAGRAPH OPINION (REFTEL), WHICH  
THE PLENARY SESSION ADOPTED WITHOUT AMENDMENT. THAT

OPINION SAYS "GENUINE DIFFERENCES OF EXPERIENCES AND OPINION EXIST WITHIN THE COMMITTEE" ON THE SUBJECT OF WORKER PARTICIPATION. THE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION EXTENDS EVEN TO THE COMMITTEE'S LABOR MEMBERS, ANTOINE LAVAL, NATIONAL SECRETARY OF THE FRENCH FORCE OUVRIERE (FO), POINTED OUT.

4. CLEMENT HENNIKER-HEATON, SPOKESMAN FOR THE BRITISH CONFEDERATION OF INDUSTRY, SAID THE "DEBATES IN THE COMMITTEE HAVE SHOWN THAT THERE ARE NO BLUEPRINTS FOR INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY--NOR WILL THERE EVER BE ANY-- THAT ARE GENERALLY APPLICABLE."

5. AS A RESULT, THE COMMITTEE ADOPTED THE POSITION THAT THE EC COMMISSION SHOULD TAKE A "FLEXIBLE" APPROACH TOWARD WORKER PARTICIPATION--I.E., AN APPROACH THAT IMPOSES NO SINGLE MODEL, SUCH AS WEST GERMANY'S CODETERMINATION. EVEN GERD MUHR, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE GERMAN FEDERATION OF LABOR (DGB), VOTED FOR THE OPINION, BUT HE ALSO SPOKE UP IN DEFENSE OF CODETERMINATION, ARGUING--IN RESPONSE TO ONE EMPLOYER'S COMMENTS--THAT WORKER REPRESENTATION PROMOTED, RATHER THAN THREATENED, THE EFFICIENCY OF AN ENTERPRISE.

6. ETIENNE DAVIGNON, EC COMMISSIONER RESPONSIBLE FOR WORKER PARTICIPATION AND OTHER ASPECTS OF COMPANY LAW, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SAID THE ESC DISCUSSIONS WOULD SERVE AS A BASIS FOR A NEW COMMISSION "WORKING PAPER" ON WORKER PARTICIPATION TO BE PRESENTED TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT FOR ITS CONSIDERATION. WHAT WOULD EMERGE SUBSEQUENTLY, SAID DAVIGNON, WOULD BE A COMMISSION PROPOSAL TO THE EC COUNCIL FOR A NEW DIRECTIVE COVERING "NOT ONE SINGLE SYSTEM BUT A COMMON SET OF RULES" ON WORKER PARTICIPATION.

7. COMMENT: DAVIGNON DID NOT SAY WHAT THOSE RULES WOULD ENTAIL, BUT IT SEEMS CLEAR AT THIS STAGE THAT CODETERMINATION WILL NOT BE ONE OF THEM. ONE EC COMMISSION STAFF OFFICIAL MAINTAINED THAT THE COMMISSION'S GUIDELINES ON WORKER PARTICIPATION WOULD PROBABLY BE VOLUNTARY. HINTON

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NNN



## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** LABOR RELATIONS, INDUSTRY  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
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